

Esther Gould's Book Corner

"THE GREEN BAY TREE"

By Louis Bromfield. Frederick A. Stokes Co.

Here in "The Green Bay Tree" is a most remarkable thing, a first novel which is a fifth. It shows no usual amount of self restraint and literary pride for an author not to attempt to launch his first four progeny upon the world, but to wait until, after the first joy of creation is over, he can still say, "That is good."

But that restraint is responsible for the instantaneous success of Louis Bromfield's "first novel." And even now the other four will not be tenderly released from drydock and sent out to ride happily on the waves of this stirring success. On the contrary, one of them was carted ignominiously away the other day by the Salvation Army. For old paper.

All this is an interesting phenomenon. And it typifies the very sane and straight forward point of view which has made this book memorable. Truly memorable since when you close its covers you have a perfectly clear picture of a whole phase in the life of a family and of a part of our country.

Cypress Hill was built and christened by one John Shane when there was only country roundabout and he and his bride-to-be, a farmer's daughter, rode their horses recklessly in the paddock. And Cypress Hill because of John Shane's brilliant and romantic career became known to the people as "Shane's Castle." And like an old feudal castle it stands through the coming years, symbol of its owners' silent resisting struggle against the invasion of the steel mills.

But the mills come anyway, and at the opening of the book they have completely surrounded Cypress Hill with a strangle hold. Each member of the Shane family enters the unequal fight—Julia Shane the wife, dying triumphant, for an enemy whom you ignore cannot defeat you, Irene one daughter, vainly combating it with her imaginings, and finally broken by them, Lily the other daughter, lazy, beautiful, never quite caring enough to either conquer or be conquered.

And the struggle against the mills only typifies a deeper struggle—the struggle against life, the two daughters handicapped by a strange heredity from their father, the mother handicapped by his memory. "The Green Bay Tree" is a book intensely real and exceedingly well written.

"ILIANA, STORIES OF A WANDERING RACE"

By Konrad Bercovici. Boni & Liveright.

Konrad Bercovici can well write "Stories of a Wandering Race." He is himself a wanderer, not only by reason of the gypsy blood in his veins but by inclination and interest. He is at this moment wandering over the United States of America studying and writing about the foreign quarters of other cities than New York, which he has in his earlier books pictured so vividly.

Mr. Bercovici does not overdo things. He knows from his experience with these strange naive people whom we call foreigners and he calls brothers, that nothing is so overdone as life. One Sunday evening about eight months ago Mr. Bercovici was taxiing home with a lady of his acquaintance from a meeting in an east side negro church. The lady of his acquaintance was Miss Rebecca West. Arrived at her hotel Miss West alighted.

As Mr. Bercovici settled himself in the taxi once more the driver turned and said pleasantly, "Now that the lady has gotten out I am going to kill myself." Suiting the action to

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NINA

By Susan Eriz
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the word he stepped on the gas and aimed for one of the gaunt iron legs of the elevated tracks. His aim was good, he must have been practicing for he killed himself without injuring Mr. Bercovici, except nervously, at all.

If this appears in a story will you call it overdone? Probably.

Yet it won't be, nor is it that Muzio's "knees sagged underneath her, her eyes opened for a moment, and they saw her own blood dripping from the dagger in the hands of Perez." Perez had loved her.

In Havana, Roumania, Marseilles, we find these wanderers. And they are not always killing the thing they love. There is Carlos refusing a fortune which will bring him the woman he loves because the bird he has for sale will die in New York. "It is too cold for him there . . ." Then suddenly he threw his head back, and, handing the money over to the buyers he said 'I cannot sell him to you, because he will die there. Take your money back.'

Mr. Bercovici writes with that finely measured English which is, alas, most common to foreigners. Yes, Mr. Edward J. O'Brien is to be congratulated on giving each of these stories a "three star" ranking in his annual list.

DIX IN NEW ONE

"A Man Must Live" is the name of the new Paramount Picture in which Richard Dix has the part of a reporter. The story will be remembered as "Jungle Law" and was written by I. A. R. Wylie. Paramount, it is said, spared no expense in the production of this novel photoplay which has for its theme the intrigue and romance of a big newspaper. "A Man Must Live" is coming to McVickers.

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With a preface by Edna St. Vincent Millay

DISTRESSING DIALOGUES

By Nancy Boyd

Remember how you laughed at these in "Vanity Fair?"

Harper & Brothers, Publishers

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